

Project Director. Also discuss the experience, qualifications, and availability of all personnel, including the Project Director, to direct and carry out the project.

(c) The State Office will review the proposal and forward the proposal to the National Office Project Manager, within 15 days of receipt, with the State Office's recommendations.

(d) The National Office will make a preliminary review of the proposal and reserves the right to return it to the State Office with any questions or comments to be clarified by the 1890 or other eligible educational institution or community-based organization. A time period for resubmission will be specified.

(e) All proposals from entities eligible for funding under §1943.105 of this subpart shall be evaluated for funding consideration. To assist in the evaluation and obtain the best possible balance of viewpoints for funding consideration, a proposal review panel will be used. The proposal review panel will be selected and organized to provide maximum expertise and objective judgment in the evaluation of proposals. The proposal review panel will use Form FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 1943-2, "EVALUATION—Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program," to evaluate each proposal. The proposal review panel will evaluate each proposal against the five criteria using the following scale: Highly Responsive (5); Fully Responsive (3); Marginally Responsive (1); and Not Responsive (0). The criteria used by the proposal review panel and the criteria weights are:

(1) *Feasibility and Policy Consistency* (3.5). Degree to which the proposal clearly describes its objective and evidences a high level of feasibility and consistency with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy and FSA mission.

(2) *Institutional Commitment* (3.5). Degree to which the institution or organization is committed to the project, as shown by funds, in-kind services, or historical success in meeting the objectives of the program.

(3) *Number of Counties and Farmers Served* (3.5). Degree to which the pro-

posal reflects collaborative approaches in meeting with other agencies or organizations to enhance the objectives of the program. Also, the areas and number of farmers who would benefit from the services offered.

(4) *Socially Disadvantaged Applicants—Outreach* (3.5). Degree to which the proposal contains efforts to reach persons identified as socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in designated counties.

(5) *Preparatory Features—Statement of Work* (6.0). Degree to which the proposal reflects special innovative features to attract, interest, and improve the economical and social conditions of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

(f) The final decision to award is at the discretion of the awarding official. The awarding official shall consider the ranking, comments, and recommendations from the proposal review panel and any pertinent information before deciding which applications to approve and the order of approval. The awarding official will notify in writing entities whose proposals are rejected. In accordance with §1900.55 of subpart B of part 1900 of this chapter, appeal rights will be provided only to those entities identified as eligible under §1943.105 of this subpart.

(g) After a decision regarding funding is made, FSA and the recipient which is selected will enter into a grant or cooperative agreement. The awarding official will notify the recipient of approval and inform them of the necessary documents needed to execute the agreement. If no funding is involved, FSA and the recipient will enter into an MOU.

§§ 1943.112–1943.114 [Reserved]

§ 1943.115 Authorized use of funds.

Any funds authorized under this subpart will be used solely for the operation and administration of the Small Farmer Outreach Training and Technical Assistance Program specifically for the project under the cooperative or other agreement. There is no other authorized use of the funds. Eligible costs are limited to those line items specified in §1943.111 (b)(4) of this subpart.